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25X1 SUBJECT Failure of the First Blast Furnace, Eisenhüttenkombinat-Ost, Fürstenberg/Oder

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1. The deadline for putting the first blast furnace into operation at the Eisenhüttenkombinat-Ost, Fürstenberg/Oder, was originally set for 15 September 1951. Because of various difficulties in completing the construction of the furnace, which would have a daily production capacity of 500 tons, the formal dedication was postponed four days and took place on 19 September.* The furnace had actually not yet been completed, and a fire was built at this time merely for propaganda purposes. In order to impress laymen attending the dedication, a great amount of smoke was produced by igniting various inflammable materials, such as oil-soaked rags. The fire had to be extinguished on the same evening in order to allow workmen to proceed with the construction. The principal parts still to be constructed were the piping connections to the mouth of the furnace.

2. However, a few hours after the furnace was put into operation, the two blower installations, followed by the reserve blower, broke down, one after the other. In two of the blowers, the 2,000 kilowatt high voltage motors, produced by Sachsenwerk (SAG Kabel), were damaged. These motors had been designed and built according to Russian models, especially constructed to save copper. Their breakdown was believed to be the result of overloading. The mounting (produced by Jäger u. Company, Leipzig (SAG AMO)) of the third blower was also damaged.

3. Operation of the furnace was then continued by using a small emergency blower. As a result of this procedure the temperature produced in the smelting zone was too low, and the furnace began gradually to clog up. Top parts of the furnace became dangerously hot (500 degrees centigrade), and the possibility of gas explosions was feared. In order to prevent this, it was necessary to let the furnace cool off, and the 150 ton content, a mixture of raw iron, slag, and coke, solidified. This was the situation in the last week of October 1951. Exercising the greatest precaution, workers must now undertake to blast out this solid mass with dynamite.

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This will certainly result in heavy damage to the outer walls and might result in deforming the entire furnace. The repair of the furnace may require several months.

4. The firm Bleichert, Leipzig, (SAG Transmasch), was to produce the incline conveyor for charging the furnace. Since Bleichert is now working at full capacity on Russian reparations orders, the delivery date for this machine was postponed to the end of 1951. A temporary small conveyor, with a capacity of only two tons, was used to charge the furnace. Through overloading, the conveyor cable broke, and the conveyor car fell to the ground. In this accident, the three circular scaffolds around the furnace collapsed and several workmen were killed.

5. Contrary to official plans, no Russian iron ore has as yet arrived at Fürstenberg/Oder. The furnace has been charged with limonite iron ore (Wasseneisenstein) from the Bardeleben area. Ore from this site is also to be used in the Calbe/Saale project.

6. The first furnace at the Eisenhüttenkombinat West, Calbe/Saale, a project for the smelting of iron ore in open-hearth furnaces with lignite from Central Germany, was recently also put into operation. Until now, this new type process has resulted in the production of an unusable slag-like iron with a two per cent sulphur and two per cent phosphorous content.

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